

*Lachlan Tighe...Talking Tactically*  
*Website bowls coaching column April 2010*

***Bowls, a formula for being competitive***

At a recent bowls function I attended, Kel Kerkow was asked this question by a bowler...how do you address a form slump mid game? Kel responded by saying...focus, concentrate.

As I listened I thought, does the bowler know what he has to focus/ concentrate on? Days later a premier league player said could I answer this concern...I lead well for 9 ends, go off my game for 6 ends, then return to form to finish the game close to the level I started the game.

And one other bowler put this to me...I want to be the best lead in Australia and represent Australia.

In all three cases I think they sought a 'formula'.

Where do I start. Consistency is a word I would resort to in response to all three queries, but how do we acquire it.

A suggestion I provide is for these three bowlers (all good bowlers) to know precisely what is occurring when they deliver the perfect delivery in training and games. They need to know they have a pre delivery routine, they sight the line, how they get down and extend out and follow through and are aware of all parts of the body that enable that to happen. Do a repeat perfect delivery to end on the original for reinforcement of top standard – I call that 'caterpillar'.

However the three bowlers must know, feel, observe what they do well every delivery in training prior to taking that consistent mindset into any game. And when they bow a crap bowl in training to make an instant comparison to how they differed to the perfect delivery done also in training. That requires a mental mindset which good bowlers don't always have, whereas champion bowlers most often do have.

Bowlers when you deliver the 'ripper' delivery you love, store it in the memory, treasure it, recall it, repeat it...at training. It can be brought then to your game. What we do in fact in bowls to my eternal annoyance is recall and repeat all the negative/ bad stuff. And you do it (enough with the negatives) at training so negativity is near perfect when you compete as it is your usual behaviour. Yuk!!! Let's overcome that with some suggestions on performance.

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Performance, erasing problems

A change in mindset is necessary for you and my three bowlers above. Part of that barrier I see in all bowlers is the unrealistic expectations you have: train to be better, not perfect.

And train to see the elimination/ erasure of these sample mindset barriers below hindering your consistency:

- negative verbal instructions
- negative 'commentating' from team members
- not watching your poor bowl finish its flight
- negative/ moping body language
- self centred leads ( in team games !!!) chasing their bowls
- seeing and not believing that your repeat mistake is the last one
- bowlers asking skips the score not focusing on the directions or instructions

Working to recall your very good delivery combined with working to erase the negative behaviour on the training track may help all three bowlers when they enter the fray of future competition games.

When all said and done these three bowlers are not too far away from Kel in their technical skill, they need to address the gap he has over them in mental mindset.

Congrats to the bowlers in my squad who have won various championships this season or more so since the start of 2010 – 1 state pairs; 5 group singles; 7 club singles; 2 club pairs; 2 group triples; 1 group fours – not a bad strike rate.

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**Consistency drill**

2 bowlers each located on a mat 6-8m apart share and deliver just the one bowl alternately.



Each bowler is to deliver the bowl straight down that chalk line in the centre of the rink where it is marked for about 6-8 metres and the object is to deliver a draw bowl with sufficient force for it to travel totally along that chalk line to get to the other mat.

It is not a drive delivery- in fact it is more a simulated maximum length draw feel delivery.

The team of 2 bowlers are to get 10 consecutive deliveries right down the chalk line, no drives, to succeed, and, if at any time the bowl does not progress FULLY down the line the team starts the count to 10 again.

Regards,  
Lachlan Tighe.